



Written by [Warren Mass](#) on August 25, 2015

Jeb Bush: Asians Abuse “Noble Concept” of Birthright Citizenship

Former Florida governor and presidential candidate Jeb Bush was asked at a McAllen, Texas, news conference Monday if he thought his use of the term “anchor baby” might harm him among Hispanic voters. Perhaps concerned that it could, he said when he used the term, he meant to apply it mostly to Asians.



The issue of “anchor babies” — babies born in the United States to mothers who are here illegally in order to secure birthright citizenship for them — became a prime issue in the presidential campaign when candidate Donald Trump called for ending the practice when he revealed his immigration plan on August 16.

The *Washington Post* and AFP quoted a statement Bush made on Monday to reporters at McAllen’s Palenque Grill:

What I was talking about was the specific case of fraud being committed where there is organized efforts — and frankly it’s more related to Asian people — coming into our country, having children in that organized effort, taking advantage of a noble concept, which is birthright citizenship.

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By choosing to hold a press event just nine miles from the Mexican border and by speaking intermittently in Spanish and referring to the fact that his wife is Mexican American, Bush evidently sought to contrast his immigration policies with the plan that Trump outlined last week. Bush’s defensive posture was likely a response to two videos released by the Hillary Clinton campaign last week and on Monday that sought to link Bush’s immigration plan with Trump’s — specifically seizing on Bush’s use of the term “anchor babies.”

During the McAllen conference, Bush addressed the Clinton charges head on:

My background, my life, the fact that I’m immersed in the immigrant experience — this is ludicrous for the Clinton campaign and others to suggest that somehow I’m using [anchor babies as] a derogatory term. And by the way, I think we need to take a step back and chill out a little bit as it relates to the political correctness, that somehow you have to be scolded every time you say something.

After defending himself against Clinton’s charges, Bush went on the offensive against Trump:

Mr. Trump’s plans are not grounded in conservative principles. The simple fact is that his proposal is unrealistic. It will cost hundreds of billions of dollars. It will violate people’s civil liberties. It will create friction with our third-largest trading partner that is not necessary.



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Despite the Clinton campaign's assertions, Bush and Trump have expressed contrasting views on immigration. Trump's plan specifically calls for "ending birthright citizenship for the children born in the United States of parents who are here illegally." As we have noted, Bush does not object to birthright citizenship in principle, and described it as "a noble concept." Unlike many conservatives and constitutionalists — he does not dispute the loose interpretation of the 14th Amendment that applies a right granted to freed slaves whose ancestors lived in the United States for generations to aliens who come into the United States for the primary purpose of giving birth here.

Where Bush apparently draws the line, however, is the practice that has become common among Asian women called "maternity tourism." AFP reported that last March, U.S. authorities raided dozens of locations in Los Angeles suspected of offering "maternity tourism" services for pregnant Chinese women who want to give birth in the United States in order to secure U.S. citizenship for their children.

The report cited a statement from U.S. Immigration and Customs Enforcement that some Chinese women have paid more than \$50,000 for such services.

A Chinese woman able to afford \$50,000 to travel to the United States to give birth is obviously in a different category from an impoverished Mexican woman, and is almost certainly motivated by different reasons. While those from south of the border most likely come here illegally to escape poverty and seek a better life in America, the Chinese "maternity tourism" client is far from poor. Furthermore, not all of them are here illegally, and many possess valid tourist visas. This suggests that unlike women from Mexico or Guatemala, who intend to use their "anchor baby" as a steppingstone to gain immediate citizenship for themselves, the Chinese women having babies in America may be thinking more long-term, preparing their children for eventual permanent migration to the United States.

It is impossible for a citizen of China to attain the level of affluence required for "maternity tourism" unless they are well connected with the communist government. This suggests several possible explanations, including whether the Chinese government is grooming these new U.S. citizens as future overseas business managers who will not require the usual visas to work in the United States — or even for future espionage activities.

Whatever motivations the Chinese "maternity tourists" and their handlers in the Chinese government might have, Bush has spoken out against the practice. However, this still places him very far away from several other GOP candidates — including Kentucky Senator Rand Paul, Texas Senator Ted Cruz, Wisconsin Governor Scott Walker, Louisiana Governor Bobby Jindal, and South Carolina Senator Lindsey Graham — who would end birthright citizenship entirely.

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